

MILL WATER SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

To promote a transparent approach to raising attendance. It is the aim of the school to ensure punctuality and regular attendance which will help raise achievement and enable pupils to realise their full potential.

Purpose

1. To provide a consistent message to pupils and parents/carers.
2. To ensure continuity and progression in the learning process.
3. To ensure a high standard of attendance is achieved and maintained.
4. To provide a safe and secure environment for pupils.

Legal responsibilities of parents in relation to school attendance (Section 7 Education Act 1996)

The parent of every child of compulsory school age must ensure that he/she receives efficient full-time education suitable to:

- a) his/her age, ability and aptitude; and
 - b) any special educational needs he/she may have
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. For pupils registered at a school, this means that pupils must attend regularly. Failure to do so may result in their parents committing a criminal offence.

Guidelines

1. Absence can only be authorised by the school for:
 - a) sickness or other unavoidable causes
 - b) days set aside for family religious observance
 - c) where LA school transport has not been provided to a child that is entitled to it
 - d) other reasons if there are exceptional circumstances, approved by the school.
2. The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

3. For all absences, there should normally be formal notification from parents. Only the Headteacher (or delegated members of staff) can authorise any absence and may refuse to do so unless it is felt that the absence is justified by one of the reasons stated above.

4. In cases of unauthorised term-time absences, the Headteacher should follow the Devon County Council protocol and apply directly to the Education Welfare Service to generate a Penalty Notice warning letter. This should be done by completing the Penalty Notice Certificate of Absence Form and returning it to:

Penalty Notice Officer, EWS, Babcock LDP, Second Floor, Milford House, Exeter, EX2 5GF.

5. The school will liaise closely with parents advising them as early as possible if there are cases of suspected unauthorised absence, or their child's attendance falls below 80%.

6. Parents have a responsibility to inform the school of absence before 9.30am on the day; or, for absences of longer than one day, before 9.30am on the first day.

7. Where no satisfactory explanation for absences is received, parents will be contacted by the school.

8. The Education Welfare Officer will be notified in the following circumstances:

- unauthorised absence by a student of more than 2 half-day sessions (in aggregate) in any one term
- attendance of less than 80% by any pupil
- where action taken at school level has failed to improve attendance/punctuality for a particular pupil.

9. Parents are to inform the school, in writing, if a child is to be removed from a roll.

If a child leaves a school to be home educated, then parents/carers should liaise and seek advice from Elective Home Education, Babcock LDP, Second Floor, Milford House, Exeter, EX2 5GF.

When a pupil moves from school and no notification has been received from another school, the 'old' school should complete a Children Missing from Education form and return it to: EMS Data Team, ScoMIS Office, Great Moor House, Bittern Road, Sowton Industrial Estate, Exeter, EX2 7NL.

(Where the 'new' school is known, as a safeguard, the 'old' school should make contact with the receiving school to alert them to the move.)

10. The school will adopt a multi-agency approach in supporting children and their families to improve their attendance.

11. For health and safety reasons, the school needs to be aware of where pupils are, particularly those leaving or arriving on the premises during a session. An appropriate recording system should therefore be instigated.

12. Parents' meetings, and other occasions can be used to stress to all parents the importance and benefits of regular attendance and punctuality. Advantage should also be made of regular school to home newsletters etc.